

Facts about pages and messengers

Eleven pages, one from each Congressional district, are appointed by members of the Senate on a rotating basis. Five pages are elected by the Senate leadership.

Messengers are appointed by the Clerk of the Senate at the recommendation of a Senator who is not scheduled to make a page appointment. The same duties, pay, and expectations apply to messengers.

Senate Pages/Messengers are students from across the Commonwealth between the age of 13 and 14 at the time of appointment (first day of session).

They work the duration of session (45 days in odd years and 60 days in even years) and are eligible to serve for one legislative term only. Housing is provided Sunday night through Thursday night. All pages/messenger leave each Friday and return Sunday afternoon.

The program is nationally recognized for engaging participants in the legislative process through hands-on training and job responsibility.



The role of pages and messengers

The Virginia General Assembly convenes on the second Wednesday in January, by order of the Constitution of Virginia. We provide an orientation program for families, followed by two days of in-depth training for pages/messengers in preparation for the first day of session. The pages/messengers are regularly assigned to the following:

- Assist with information desk operations
- Work alongside clerks with committee operations
- Speak with visiting school groups, tourists, and international visitors
- Prepare the Senate Chamber for session each day by distributing folders, collating bills, and placing daily calendars on the chamber desks
- Staff the Senate Chamber doors, assist with Senate Gallery seating, messages, and escort visitors
- Offer general support to Clerk's Office staff and areas such as support services, constituent services, information systems, and other departments

An *introduction* to the

Senate of Virginia

Page/Messenger Program

for teachers, educators, and homeschool instructors



Work hours and absence from school

All pages/messengers work Monday—Thursday, 8:15 a.m.—5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:15 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Absenteeism from school is addressed in 8VAC20-110-40 and 8VAC20-110-50 of the Virginia Administrative Code.

Additional opportunities for pages and messengers

The program affords training and professional development opportunities, in addition to off-site educational tours. Examples from recent years include the following:

- An etiquette session
- A money management lesson
- A cyber safety seminar
- A panel of college admissions representatives
- A session-long community service project (class effort)
- Tours of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Federal Reserve Bank, Tredegar Center, and the Library of Virginia
- Engaging visits to the Virginia Executive Mansion and St. John's Church—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death reenactment
- A visit from program alumni
- A mock session with legislators towards the end of session

An overview of evening study hall

Senate study hall is mandatory for all pages/messengers during session every Monday—Thursday night, 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. Everyone must come prepared with school work or a book to read. Use of technology is monitored closely and must be limited to educational content. Cell phone use and outside disruption are prohibited.

Study hall is monitored by certified Richmond area teachers who are available to assist the students in several disciplines and subject areas. Since pages/messengers are age 13 to 14, and the grade levels of all participants vary, personalized teaching instruction is not possible.

Study hall is held in a meeting room at the hotel, not a classroom, and space is very limited. If your student needs additional assistance with homework assignments, please make those arrangements on the weekends.

The tutors do not make work assignments. They are available to assist the students with the following:

- Assignments from school
- Proctoring tests, quizzes, and exams
- Offering general guidance as needed

Getting work to your student

- Some schools prefer to have the guidance counselor obtain the student's assignments from each teacher at the end of the week.
- Assignments mailed to the Senate Clerk's Office will be logged in daily, sent to study hall, distributed, and returned to the Senate Clerk's Office upon completion to be mailed, e-mailed, or faxed back to the school.
- Students are highly discouraged from transporting tests, quizzes, and exams.

Helpful suggestions for educators

- Families and students should meet with the appropriate school personnel prior to the start of session to determine a plan of action for obtaining and returning schoolwork during session.
- All pages/messengers should come to study hall prepared to work for two hours, four nights a week.
- Students should always have a book available to read, in case they finish assignments early.
- Tests, quizzes, and exams sent to the Senate Clerk's Office will be proctored in study hall and returned to the school in a timely manner. Detailed instructions, along with a deadline in which the material is to be returned, must be included.
- Pages/Messengers are excused for SOL testing.

The Honorable Susan Clarke Schaar
Clerk of the Senate

Mr. Bladen Finch (page class of 1994)
Senate Page Program Director

Ms. Trish O'Brien
Secretary to the Clerk

Updated 08/01/13

Applicant requirements

The program application contains more details about the program.

Applicants must have an A/B average when applying to the program. They should submit a completed online application with the following:

- A current photograph
- Three letters of reference from previous/current teachers, family friends, clergy, etc.
- An essay about why they want to serve in the Senate Page Program
- The completed school authorization form signed by a principal, guidance counselor, and teachers.

Completed applications must be submitted between September 15 and November 1. Decisions are usually announced by mid-December for the following year.

For access to the online page program application, please send an inquiry via e-mail: pageinfo@senate.virginia.gov

(804) 698-7400 tel
888-892-6948 toll free
(804) 698-7670 fax
8:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m. during session
inquiries: pageinfo@senate.virginia.gov
web: virginiageneralassembly.gov
click "Capitol Classroom"